

MARRIAGE AND DIVORCE: State Summary

#### MARRIAGE AND DIVORCE

## INTRODUCTION

## **Purpose of Surveillance**

Marriage and divorce certificates serve as legal documentation of marital status, and provide limited surveillance information useful in describing current and changing societal attitudes that impact individual and family relationships. Successful marriages often result in emotional and economic supports helpful in achieving adequate levels of health and living standards for family members. Divorce is associated with the loss of psychological and economic supports, and with an increase in the risk of poor health and economic disadvantage for family members. Changes in marriage and divorce rates and demographics, such as the average age at marriage, can indicate population shifts in family size and family economic stability.

### Source of Data: Certificate of Marriage

Information on marriages presented in this report is obtained from data recorded on the *Certificate of Marriage* completed for marriages that occurred in Louisiana in the 1998 calendar year.

Louisiana law requires that marriage certificates be submitted by the parish clerks of court to the Vital Records Registry prior to the tenth of the month following the marriage. The law also requires that the social security numbers of the bride and groom remain confidential.

It is estimated that certificates for at least 95% of marriages occurring annually in Louisiana are filed with Vital Records.

### Source of Data: Certificate of Divorce or Annulment

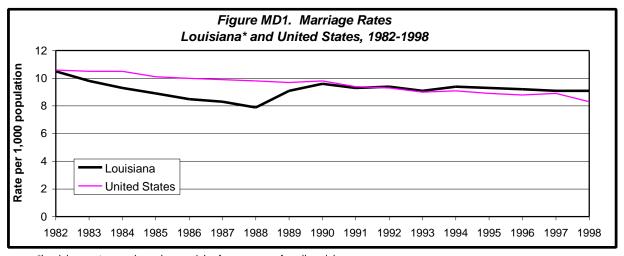
Divorce information presented in this report is obtained from the *Certificate of Divorce or Annulment* and from summary divorce counts submitted by parish clerks of court for divorces that occurred in Louisiana in the 1998 calendar year. Louisiana law requires that divorce certificates be submitted to the Vital Records Registry prior to the tenth of the month following the divorce, and that the identities of the registrants remain confidential.

Unfortunately, many Louisiana parishes do not submit divorce certificates to the central registry, and incomplete information is submitted by many parishes that do file certificates. The divorce tabulations included in this report reflect summary divorce counts made by the clerks of court, as well as data derived from actual certificates received in the central office. Because of poor reporting, Louisiana is excluded from the national divorce registration system.

### **MARRIAGE**

### **Counts and Rates**

- In 1998, a total of 39,544 marriages were held in Louisiana, a decrease of 118 marriage from the 1997 total of 39,662 (Table MD1).
- Using data reported by the parish in which the marriage occurred, Louisiana's 1998 marriage rate was 9.1 marriages per 1,000 population. This rate was the same with 1997 (Figure MD1, Table MD1).
- After dropping to a low of 7.9 per 1,000 population in 1988, Louisiana's marriage rates through the 1990's have been stable and have remained above 9.0 per 1,000 population (Figure MD1, Table MD1).
- National and state marriage rates were approximately equal in the early 1980s, but a steep decline in state
  rates during the 1980s caused the rates to fall below national rates as the decade progressed. In the 1990s,
  however, state rates have risen to a level slightly higher than national rates (Figure MD1, Table MD1).



\*Louisiana rates are based on parish of occurrence for all parishes Source: Louisiana State Center for Health Statistics, National Center for Health Statistics

The *marriage rate* measures marriages occurring in a population during a given period of time. It is calculated by dividing the number of marriages occurring in a geographic area during one year by the total population of the area, then multiplying the quotient by 1,000. The rate is expressed as the number of marriages per 1,000 population. Marriage rates would be more representative of Louisiana resident marriages if they were calculated using the number of marriages to *residents* of an area, rather than the number of marriages *occurring* in an area. Marriage counts by residence of brides and grooms are difficult to quantify, however, because couples often choose to marry outside their residence area.

Table MD1. Marriage Counts and Rates Louisiana and United States, 1982-1998							
	Louis	iana	United States				
Year	Number	Rate* <sup>+</sup>	Rate*				
1982	45485	10.5	10.6				
1983	43107	9.8	10.5				
1984	41088	9.3	10.5				
1985	39357	8.9	10.1				
1986	37459	8.5	10.0				
1987	36185	8.3	9.9				
1988	33974	7.9	9.8				
1989	38574	9.1	9.7				
1990	40443	9.6	9.8				
1991	39161	9.3	9.4				
1992	40053	9.4	9.3				
1993	39364	9.1	9.0				
1994	40405	9.4	9.1				
1995	40516	9.3	8.9				
1996	40221	9.2	8.8				
1997	39662	9.1					
1998	39544	9.1	8.3				

<sup>\*</sup>Rate per 1,000 population

Source: Louisiana State Center for Health Statistics, National Center for Health Statistics

# Age of the Bride and Groom

• In 1998 the largest proportion of Louisiana brides (26.4%) fell into the 20-24 year age group, while the largest proportions of grooms were fairly evenly distributed between the 20-24 and the 25-29 year age groups (22.5% and 23.4%, respectively) (Table MD3).

	Table MD2. Marriage Counts by Age of Groom and Age of Bride Louisiana, 1998															
Age of								Age o	f Bride	9						
Groom	Total	Under 15	15-17	18-19	20-24	25-29	30-34	35-39	40-44	45-49	50-54	55-59	60-64	65-69	<i>70</i> +	Unk.
Total	39544	7	791	3223	10447	8367	5347	3939	2826	1799	979	476	283	168	166	726
LT-15	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	•	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
15-17	107	-	52	43	8	2	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1
18-19	1497	4	325	710	384	54	11	2	3	1	-	-	-	-	-	3
20-24	8888	1	340	1914	5239	1074	225	50	14	4	2	-	-	-	1	24
25-29	9241	-	52	416	3510	3767	1021	332	86	25	7	1	-	-	-	24
30-34	6010	2	10	80	940	2129	1771	704	274	69	13	3	1	-	-	14
35-39	4256	-	6	34	225	834	1221	1149	545	175	48	5	2	-	-	12
40-44	3163	-	-	13	75	302	655	899	778	315	93	17	6	-	-	10
45-49	2260	-	2	5	32	119	265	477	598	530	171	39	11	4	1	6
50-54	1432	-	-	2	11	37	111	211	313	363	264	84	19	4	5	8
55-59	812	-	-	-	2	16	34	65	128	179	210	126	34	7	5	6
60-64	499	-	-	-	-	4	12	30	51	86	101	95	87	27	6	-
65-69	276	-	-	-	-	3	3	9	13	22	34	59	63	49	20	1
70+	321	-	-	-	-	2	3	2	16	15	24	40	51	61	94	13
Unk.	782	-	4	6	21	24	14	9	7	15	12	7	9	16	34	604

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>†</sup>Louisiana rates are based on parish of occurrence for 64 parishes

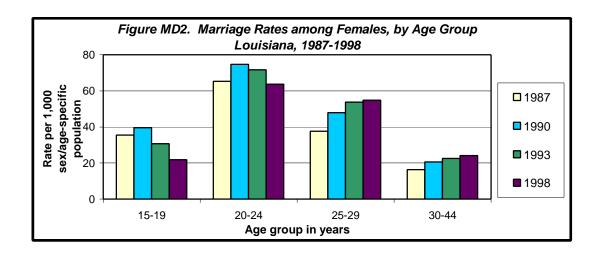
• The average age of Louisiana brides in 1998 was 30.0 years; the average for grooms was 32.4 years. Over the past few years, there has been a steady increase in the ages of men and women who marry in Louisiana (Table MD3).

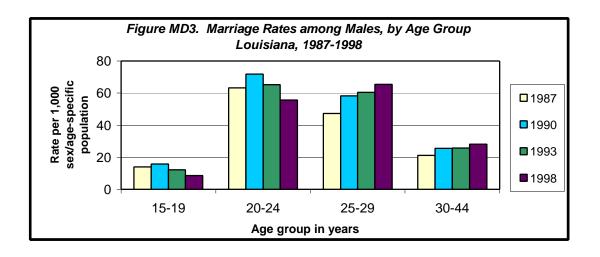
Table MD3. Average and Median Ages of Brides and Grooms Louisiana, 1992-1998							
Year of	Average A	ge in Years	Median Ag	e in Years			
Marriage	Bride	Groom	Bride	Groom			
1992	28.6	31.0	25.3	27.5			
1993	28.7	31.0	25.4	27.6			
1994	29.0	31.0	25.6	27.8			
1995	29.4	32.0	26.1	28.2			
1996	29.6	32.0	26.3	28.4			
1997	29.8	32.3	26.4	28.7			
1998	30.0	32.4	26.7	28.8			

During the 1990s, there has been a decrease in the rates of marriage in younger age groups, and an increase
in rates seen in older age groups. Following a rise in the early 1990s, marriage rates have declined during
the 1990's in men and women below age 24. This same time period has seen a steady increase in
marriage rates for both men and women over age 24 (Table MD4, Figures MD2 and MD3).

Table MD4. Marriage Rates* by Sex and Age Louisiana, 1987-1998								
	15-	19	20-24		25-29		30-44	
Year	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male
1987	35.4	14.0	65.2	63.3	37.6	47.3	16.4	21.1
1990	39.6	15.8	74.7	71.9	47.8	58.2	20.6	25.5
1993	30.7	12.1	71.7	65.3	53.8	60.5	22.5	25.8
1998	21.8	8.6	63.7	55.7	54.9	65.4	24.1	28.2

\*Rate per 1,000 sex/age-specific population





### **Prior Marital Status**

- In Louisiana in 1998, **47.7% of all marriages were first marriages for both the bride and the groom**; 59.3% of both brides and grooms entered into first marriages (Table MD5).
- In 22.7% of Louisiana's 1998 marriages, both the bride and the groom were previously divorced; 34.9% of all brides and 35.6% of all grooms were previously divorced (Table MD5).

Table MD5. Marriage Counts by Previous Marital Status of Bride and Groom Louisiana, 1998							
		Pro	evious Marital .	Status of Brid	e		
Previous Marital Status of Groom	Total	Never Married	Widowed	Divorced	Marriage Annulled	Unknown	
All	39544	23466	1223	13814	38	1003	
Never Married	23466	18848	218	4235	16	149	
Widowed	1043	135	376	520	1	11	
Divorced	14086	4361	621	8959	19	126	
Marriage Annulled	43	19	2	20	2	-	
Unknown	906	103	6	80	-	717	

• The past 12 years have seen an 8.7% decline in the number of marriages in which both the bride and the groom were never married, and a 25% increase in the percent of marriages in which both the bride and groom were previously divorced (Table MD6).

Table MD6. Percents of Marriages by Previous Marital Status of Bride and Groom Louisiana, 1987-1998								
	Never Married			Divorced				
Year	Bride	Groom	Both	Bride	Groom	Both		
1987	62.7	63.0	51.7	29.7	30.1	18.0		
1990	63.2	63.3	52.0	31.8	32.3	19.9		
1993	60.7	61.2	49.3	34.3	34.6	21.8		
1998	59.3	59.3	47.7	34.9	35.6	22.7		

• 1998 median ages in marriages of previously divorced brides and grooms were approximately 12 years higher than those in marriages between never-married brides and grooms (Table MD7).

Table MD7. Average and Median Age of Bride and Groom at this Marriage, by Previous Marital Status Louisiana, 1998								
	Avera	ge Age	Median Age					
Previous Marital Status	Bride	Groom	Bride	Groom				
All	30.0	32.4	26.7	28.8				
Bride Previously Unmarried, Groom Previously Unmarried	24.0	25.9	22.4	24.2				
Bride Previously Unmarried, Groom Previously Married	29.3	35.8	27.4	33.7				
Bride Previously Married, Groom Previously Unmarried	32.5	31.4	30.7	29.5				
Bride Previously Married, Groom Previously Married	39.8	43.0	38.2	41.2				

### Race of Bride and Groom

- In 97.2% of 1998 Louisiana marriages, both the bride and groom were of the same race (excluding unknown races and assuming that brides and grooms of other races are same-race marriages). In 68.8% of marriages, both were white. In 27.6% of marriages, both were black. In 0.8% of marriages, both were of another race (Table MD8, MD9).
- 2.8% of marriages were mixed race (excluding unknown races and assuming that brides and grooms of other races are same-race marriages), with 1.6% of total marriages being between whites and blacks (Table MD8, MD9). If other race brides and other race grooms are assumed to be of different races, mixed marriages account for 3.6% of all marriages, and same-race marriages account for 96.4% of all marriages.

Table MD8. Marriage Counts by Race of Groom and Race of Bride Louisiana, 1998								
Race of Groom								
Groom		Race of Bride						
All Races	All Races	White	Black	Other	Unknown			
	39544	27750	11135	583	76			
White	27603	27126	204	242	31			
Black	11386	441	10892	43	10			
Other	485	485 155 31 298 1						
Unknown	70	28	8	-	34			

Table MD9. Percents of Total Marriages by Race of Groom and Race of Bride Louisiana, 1998							
Race of Groom		Race of Bride					
All Races	All Races	White	Black	Other	Unknown		
	100.00	71.03	27.42	1.38	0.17		
White	69.80	68.60	0.52	0.61	0.08		
Black	28.79	1.12	27.54	0.11	0.03		
Other	1.23	0.39	0.08	0.75	0.00		
Unknown	0.18	0.07	0.02	-	0.09		

# **Month of Marriage**

With the exception of January and June, there was an average of 3,300 marriages (8.3% of all marriages) each month in Louisiana in 1998. In January, the number decreased to 2,209 (5.6% of all marriages); in June, it increased to 4,023 (10.2% of all marriages) (Figure MD4, Table MD10).

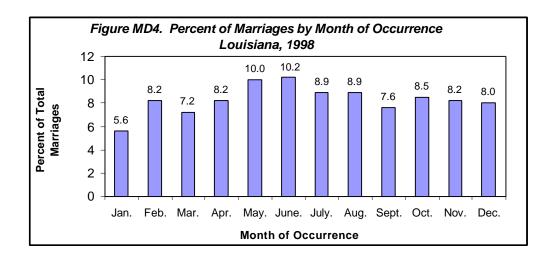


Table MD10. Counts and Percents of Marriages									
By Month of Occurrence Louisiana, 1998									
Daily									
Month	Number	Percent	Average						
Total	39544	100.0	108						
January	2209	5.6	71						
February	3260	8.2	116						
March	2853	7.2	92						
April	3254	8.2	108						
May	3942	10.0	127						
June	4023	10.2	134						
July	3506	8.9	113						
August	3534	8.9	114						
September	3011	7.6	100						
October	3353	8.5	108						
November	3228	8.2	108						
December	3174	8.0	102						
Unknown	197	-	-						

### **DIVORCE**

## **Counts**

- Divorce reports are submitted by approximately 70% of the 64 parishes in Louisiana each year. In 1998, 45
  parishes submitted reports of divorces to the state. Many of the certificates that were submitted contained
  incomplete information.
- There were a total of 12,526 divorces in the 45 parishes which submitted divorce counts. No counts were available for 19 of Louisiana's 64 parishes (Table MDP1).

The *divorce rate* measures divorces occurring in a population during a given period of time. It is calculated by dividing the number of divorces occurring in a geographic area by the total population of the area, then multiplying the quotient by 1,000. The rate is expressed as the number of divorces per 1,000 population. Because of underreporting of divorces by many parishes in Louisiana, it is not possible to calculate state-level divorce rates using data submitted by all 64 parishes.